



County of Los Angeles
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

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PHILIP L. BROWNING
Director

March 11, 2016

To: Supervisor Hilda L. Solis, Chair
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas
Supervisor Sheila Kuehl
Supervisor Don Knabe
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: Philip L. Browning
Director

Board of Supervisors
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LUVLEE'S RESIDENTIAL CARE, INC. dba NEW DAWN GROUP HOME QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Out-of-Home Care Management Division (OHCMD) conducted a Quality Assurance Review (QAR) of Luvlee's Residential Care, Inc. dba New Dawn Group Home (the Group Home) in May 2015. The Group Home has two sites; one located in the Fifth Supervisorial District and the other is located in San Bernardino County. The Group Home provides services to the County of Los Angeles DCFS foster children and youth. According to the Group Home's program statement, its stated mission is "stabilizing the child within the group home setting and to establish trust and security of knowing that they are cared for unconditionally."

The QAR looked at the status of the placed children's safety, permanency and well-being during the most recent 30 days and the Group Home's practices and services over the most recent 90 days. The Group Home scored at or above the minimum acceptable score in 8 of 9 focus areas: Safety, Permanency, Placement Stability, Visitation, Engagement, Service Needs, Assessment & Linkages, and Tracking & Adjustment. OHCMD noted opportunities for improved performance in the focus area of Teamwork.

The Group Home provided the attached approved Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) addressing the recommendations noted in this report. In December 2015, OHCMD Quality Assurance Reviewer discussed the results of the QAR with the Group Home and provided the Group Home with technical support to address methods for improvement in the area of Teamwork.

If you have any questions, your staff may contact me or Aldo Marin, Board Relations Manager, at (213) 351-5530.

PLB:EM:KR:rds

Attachments

c: Sachi A. Hamai, Chief Executive Officer
John Naimo, Auditor-Controller
Public Information Office
Audit Committee
Sean Hardge, Executive Director, Luvlee's Residential Care, Inc. dba New Dawn Group Home
Lajuannah Hills, Regional Manager, Community Care Licensing Division
Lenora Scott, Regional Manager, Community Care Licensing Division

"To Enrich Lives Through Effective and Caring Service"

LUVLEE'S RESIDENTIAL CARE, INC. dba NEW DAWN GROUP HOME
QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW
FISCAL YEAR 2014-2015

SCOPE OF REVIEW

The Out-of-Home Care Management Division (OHCMD) conducted a Quality Assurance Review (QAR) of Luvlee's Residential Care, Inc. dba New Dawn Group Home (the Group Home) in May 2015. The purpose of the QAR is to assess the Group Home's service delivery and to ensure that the Group Home is providing children with quality care and services in a safe environment, which includes physical care, social and emotional support, education and workforce readiness, and other services to protect and enhance their growth and development.

The QAR is an in-depth case review and interview process designed to assess how children and their families are benefiting from services received and how well the services are working. The QAR utilizes a six-point rating scale as a *yardstick* for measuring the situation observed in specific focus areas. The QAR assessed the following focus areas:

Status Indicators:

- Safety
- Permanency
- Placement Stability
- Visitation

Practice Indicators:

- Engagement
- Service Needs
- Assessment & Linkages
- Teamwork
- Tracking & Adjustment

For Status Indicators, the reviewer focuses on the child's functioning during the most recent 30 day period and for Practice Indicators, the reviewer focuses on the Group Home's service delivery during the most recent 90 day period.

For the purpose of this QAR, interviews were conducted with three focus children, three Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Children's Social Workers (CSWs) and three Group Home staff members.

At the time of the QAR, the focus children's average number of placements was five, their overall average length of placement was 15 months and their average age was 16. The focus children were randomly selected. None of the focus children were included as part of the sample for the 2014-2015 Contract Compliance Review.

QAR SCORING

The Group Home received a score for each focus area based on information gathered from on-site visits, agency file reviews, DCFS court reports and updated case plans, and interviews with the Group Home staff, DCFS CSWs and the children. The minimum acceptable score is 6 in the area of Safety and 5 in all remaining areas.

Focus Area	Minimum Acceptable Score	GH QAR Score	GH QAR Rating
Safety - The degree to which the Group Home ensures that the child is free of abuse, neglect, and exploitation by others in his/her placement and other settings.	6	6	Optimal Safety Status - The focus children are optimally and consistently avoiding behaviors that cause harm to self, others, or the community and are free from abuse, neglect, exploitation, and/or intimidation in placement.
Permanency - The degree to which the child is living with caregivers, who are likely to remain in this role until the child reaches adulthood, or the child is in the process of returning home or transitioning to a permanent home and the child, the Group Home staff, caregivers and DCFS CSW, support the plan.	5	5	Good Status - The focus children have substantial permanence. The focus children live in a family setting that the focus children, Group Home staff, caregivers, caseworkers, and team members have confidence will endure lifelong.
Placement Stability - The degree to which the Group Home ensures that the child's daily living, learning, and work arrangements are stable and free from risk of disruptions and known risks are being managed to achieve stability and reduce the probability of future disruption.	5	6	Optimal Stability - The focus children have optimal stability in placement settings and enjoy positive and enduring relationships with primary caregivers, key adult supporters, and peers.
Visitation - The degree to which the Group Home staff support important connections being maintained through appropriate visitation.	5	5	Substantially Acceptable Maintenance of Visitation & Connections - Generally effective family connections are being sought for all significant family/Non-Related Extended Family Members (NREFMs) through appropriate visits and other connecting strategies.

Focus Area	Minimum Acceptable Score	GH QAR Score	GH QAR Rating
Engagement - The degree to which the Group Home staff working with the child, biological family, extended family and other team members for the purpose of building a genuine, trusting and collaborative working relationship with the ability to focus on the child strengths and needs.	5	5	Good Engagement Efforts - To a strong degree, a rapport has been developed, such that the Group Home staff, DCFS CSWs and the focus children feel heard and respected.
Service Needs - The degree to which the Group Home staff involved with the child, work toward ensuring the child's needs are met and identified services are being implemented and supported and are specifically tailored to meet the child's unique needs.	5	5	Good Supports & Services - A good and substantial array of supports and services substantially matches intervention strategies identified in the case plan. The services are generally helping the focus children make progress toward planned outcomes. A usually dependable combination of informal and formal supports and services are available, appropriate, used, and seen as generally satisfactory.
Assessment & Linkages - The degree to which the Group Home staff involved with the child and family understand the child's strengths, needs, preferences, and underlying issues and services are regularly assessed to ensure progress is being made toward case plan goals.	5	6	Optimal Assessment and Understanding - The focus children's functioning and support systems are comprehensively understood. Information necessary to understand the focus children's strengths, needs, and preferences is continuously updated. Present strengths, risks, and underlying needs requiring intervention or supports are fully recognized and well understood.
Teamwork - The degree to which the "right people" for the child and family, have formed a working team that meets, talks, and makes plans together.	5	4	Minimally Adequate to Fair Teamwork - The team contains some of the important supporters and decision makers in the focus children's lives, including informal supports. The team has formed a minimally adequate to fair working system that meets, talks, and/or plans together; at least one face-to-face team meeting has been held to develop plans.

Focus Area	Minimum Acceptable Score	GH QAR Score	GH QAR Rating
Tracking & Adjustment - The degree to which the Group Home staff who is involved with the child and family is carefully tracking the progress that the child is making, changing family circumstances, attainment of goals and planned outcomes.	5	5	Good Tracking and Adjustment Process - Intervention strategies, supports, and services being provided to the focus children are generally responsive to changing conditions. Frequent monitoring, tracking, and communication of the focus children's status and service results to the team are occurring. Generally successful adaptations are based on a basic knowledge of what things are working and not working for the focus children.

STATUS INDICATORS
(Measured over last 30 days)

What's Working Now (Score/Narrative of Strengths for Focus Area)

Safety (6 Optimal Safety Status)

Safety Overview: The Group Home's safety status was optimal. While residing at the Group Home, the focus children have been free from abuse, neglect, exploitation and/or intimidation in placement; none of the focus children has shown any suicidal behavior or exhibited any self-injurious behavior during the past 30 days. The Group Home staff was trained in identifying stressors, recognizing problems such as substance abuse and harmful behavior and situations that could place a child in imminent danger. To ensure the placed children's safety, the staff has also been trained in implementing a safety plan when a placed child presents a safety concern.

The focus children reported feeling safe at all times while at the Group Home and during community outings. According to the focus children, the staff supervises them at the Group Home as well as during community outings at all times. The focus children's DCFS CSWs reported they have no concerns for the children's safety at the Group Home.

The Group Home complied with the procedures and protocols and reported Special Incident Reports (SIRs) in a timely manner and were properly cross-reported. The Group Home submitted five SIRs over the last 30 days. None of the SIRs involved the focus children. Three SIRs involved a placed child who had a history of substance abuse and absence without leave (AWOL)ing behavior. The fourth SIR involved a substance abuse incident of another placed child when he came home from school and appeared to be intoxicated. The fifth SIR involved a placed child who was hospitalized for a necessary medical procedure.

According to Out-of-Home Care Investigations Section, there were no substantiated referrals or open investigations during the past 30 days.

Permanency (5 Good Status)

Permanency Overview: The Group Home provides good permanence for the focus children. The permanency goals that are established by the DCFS CSWs are supported by the Group Home. All three focus children's permanent plan is Permanent Planned Living Arrangement. The Group Home supports the plan by encouraging the focus children to participate in Independent Living Program services and provides them with training and activities to promote self-reliance such as shopping, obtaining public transportation, meal preparation and discussing future options, including transitional housing. The focus children are encouraged to maintain contact with their family members or significant people in their lives.

The first focus child is 18 years old. The focus child reported that the Group Home assists him in his becoming self-sufficient by providing independent living skills classes at the Group Home. The Group Home supports his connections with his family members and provides him with transportation to visit his family members. The focus child plans to participate in extended foster care services and remain in the Group Home until the age of 19. The Group Home and the DCFS CSW agree with the plan.

The Group Home supports the second focus child's connection with his mother by encouraging him to maintain regular contact with her. The Group Home also encourages the focus child to maintain contact with his aunt and cousins. The second focus child reported he has developed a good rapport with the Group Home manager who has helped him improve his relationship with his mother.

The third focus child reported that the Group Home staff encourages him to maintain contact with his family members which include his mother, grandmother, adult sister, and aunt. The focus child stated that he contacts them via Facebook and telephone.

The DCFS CSWs indicated that the Group Home provides the focus children with the support necessary to ensure their permanency goals are achieved.

Placement Stability (5 Good Stability)

Placement Stability Overview: The Group Home provides optimal stability for the focus children. The focus children enjoy positive and enduring relationships with the primary caregivers and key adult supporters. To lessen placement disruptions, the Group Home makes efforts to appropriately match prospective placed children during the intake process. When possible, the Group Home administrator interviews children prior to accepting them for placement to ensure the program can effectively meet the specific needs of the child. The Group Home staff has received training to identify the focus children's needs, and to assist them in establishing positive relationships with their peers and key supporters. The Group Home case manager provides individual and group counseling to the focus children to make sure they feel supported.

All three focus children's placements have been stable with no placement or school disruptions in the last 30 days. The focus children reported enjoying living at the Group Home and had developed a good, supportive relationship with the Group Home staff.

The first focus child has lived at the Group Home for three years and was able to complete his high school education without disruption. The focus child indicated that he likes living at the Group Home as the Group Home staff is supportive and the Group Home provides him with a family-like environment. He stated that he gets along well with the Group Home staff and his peers and plans to continue residing in the Group Home until he becomes eligible for transitional housing services.

The second focus child has lived at the Group Home for over two years. The focus child stated that he likes living at the Group Home and gets along with his peers and the Group Home staff. The focus child reported that in the past, he has exhibited challenging behavior such as smoking marijuana, leaving school without permission, and returning to the Group Home late which put his placement in jeopardy; however, the Group Home staff was willing to work with him and has given him many chances to remain placed at the Group Home. The focus child stated that his future plan is to live with a family friend but he wants to remain at the Group Home until the family friend's home is approved by his DCFS CSW.

The third focus child has been living at the Group Home for seven months. The focus child reported that he enjoys living at the Group Home and he gets along with the Group Home staff and his peers. He feels his needs are being met and that he plans to remain at the Group Home until he graduates from high school.

The DCFS CSWs for the focus children indicated that the Group Home has been a stable placement for the focus children.

Visitation (5 Substantially Acceptable Maintenance of Visitation & Connections)

Visitation Overview: The Group Home provides substantially acceptable visitation for the focus children. The Group Home staff has been made aware of the focus children's court visitation orders and has supported their visitation plans. The Group Home facilitates the focus children's family visits and provides the focus children with transportation to the visits.

The first focus child has weekend visits with his family members. He utilizes his community passes to visit his relatives, older siblings and grandparents at their respective homes. Although the focus child is able to take public transportation and has been provided with a monthly bus pass, the Group Home provides transportation to his visits.

The second focus child has monitored visits with his mother at the Group Home. Initially, the focus child did not wish to have visits with his mother, however, with the Group Home staff's encouragement and support, the focus child has agreed to have monitored visits with his mother twice a month. The Group Home transports the child for his approved visits with his relatives at their home on weekends and during holiday breaks. For the focus child's recent birthday, the Group Home allowed the focus child and his family members to have a birthday party at the Group Home.

The third focus child has unmonitored visits with his grandmother and his siblings at his grandmother's house. Although the child's DCFS CSW arranges and provides transportation to the visits, the Group Home supports the child in remaining connected with his family and provides transportation as needed.

PRACTICE INDICATORS
(Measured over last 90 days)

What's Working Now (Score/Narrative of Strengths for Focus Area)

Engagement (5 Good Engagement Efforts)

Engagement Overview: The Group Home has established and maintained good engagement efforts with the focus children and key parties. The Group Home staff has open communication with DCFS CSWs, the focus children, their family members and other service providers. The Group Home keeps the focus children's DCFS CSWs informed of issues impacting the focus children.

The focus children reported that they can discuss their concerns with the Group Home staff members. The first focus child reported that his DCFS CSW and the Group Home staff worked together to help him reach his Needs and Services Plan (NSP) goals. The DCFS CSW for the focus child reported that the Group Home has made efforts to establish and maintain contact with her.

The second focus child reported that he has good rapport with the Group Home staff and felt that his DCFS CSW and the Group Home staff work together to meet his needs. The DCFS CSW for the focus child stated that the Group Home has been supportive of the focus child and rapport has been developed between the Group Home staff, the focus child and his mother.

The third focus child reported that he felt the Group Home staff works with his DCFS CSW.

Service Needs (5 Good Supports & Services)

Service Needs Overview: The Group Home provides the placed children with an array of services and extracurricular activities to help the children make progress toward their planned outcomes. Therapeutic and supportive services to address the placed children's medical, mental health, educational, social, vocational and other needs are provided. For placed children who need educational assistance, the Group Home educational specialist provides daily tutoring services and maintains regular contact with the school staff. For children who are moving towards self sufficiency, the Group Home vocational specialist provides Independent Living Program (ILP) services.

A level system to encourage positive behavior is being implemented at the Group Home. With the level system, the focus children's positive behavior is rewarded with extra privileges such as being allowed more time in the community, playing sports or visiting with friends.

According to the Group Home administrator, the Group Home is sensitive towards the placed children's cultural and individual needs. The Group Home celebrates cultural events and recognizes accomplishments. For example, when placed children graduate from school, the Group Home celebrates by having a graduation party for the child. The Group Home also makes staff available to accompany placed children who wish to attend religious services.

The Group Home case managers provide individual and group therapy for all three focus children and develop NSPs in collaboration with the focus children and their DCFS CSWs.

The first focus child reported he has completed the employment preparation and life skills program and is being assisted by the Group Home educational specialist with applying for college. The focus child also reported that he was provided with an opportunity to work part-time at a store in the past.

The second focus child receives special education services at school and has an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP). He also receives daily tutoring at the Group Home to improve his grades. Due to the focus child's history of substance abuse, the child was enrolled in an off-site drug treatment program which he successfully completed. The focus child reported that therapy has helped him with controlling his anger and concentrating at school. The focus child also reported that he participates in high school football and in track.

The third focus child also has an IEP and is receiving special education services at school. At the Group Home, the focus child receives daily tutoring to improve his grades. The focus child reported that he has made academic progress.

All three focus children reported they enjoy the extracurricular activities provided by the Group Home. The activities include bowling, laser tag, trips to the amusement parks, museums, and restaurants, outings at the park, attending sports events and having game nights at the Group Home.

The DCFS CSWs stated that the Group Home provides the services the focus children need and the Group Home staff updates them on the focus children's progress.

Assessment & Linkages (6 Optimal Assessments and Understanding)

Assessment & Linkages Overview: The Group Home comprehensively understands the focus children's functioning and their needs. The Group Home staff utilizes daily observation, communication with the focus children, reports from the Group Home residential staff and other key supporters to gain a clear picture of the focus children's strengths and needs. Depending on the children's individual needs and interests, the Group Home links the focus children with an array of services and activities available in the surrounding communities. The Group Home collaborates with various organizations in the community and involves the focus children in programs such as the Sheriff Cadet Program, Teen Center and an Art program, which provide music lessons, life skills and job readiness activities. Through the Teen Center and Art program, two of the focus children receive weekly guitar lessons and have recently performed at a famous music venue. Each focus child has also been assigned an individual mentor to help with building a healthy adult relationship.

All three focus children reported they enjoy the programs the Group Home connects them with. The first focus child and the third focus child reported they participate in weekly guitar lessons and were proud to be able to perform at a well known venue. The second focus child reported he is interested in sports and has been linked with an athletic trainer.

The DCFS CSWs for the focus children reported that the Group Home provides the services in accordance with the needs of the focus children.

Tracking & Adjustment (5 Good Tracking & Adjustment Process)

Tracking & Adjustment Overview: The Group Home's intervention strategies, supports, and services provided to the placed children and their families generally reflected the placed children's needs. The Group Home residential staff utilizes daily observation and socialization with the placed children and documents the children's progress/behavior on the Group Home Daily Behavioral Log to ensure clarity and understanding of the placed children's status. The documents are accessible to the Group Home staff. Additionally, the Group Home residential staff involved would verbally convey the information to the Group Home case manager when the placed child's behavior has been identified as warranting special attention and improvement.

The Group Home case manager also receives feedback from other key supporters such as the Group Home educational specialist and job specialist. During weekly meetings with the focus children, the Group Home case manager discusses and evaluates the focus children's progress. At least once a month, the Group Home case manager updates the focus children's DCFS CSWs regarding the children's status.

The Group Home case manager collaborates with the focus children and their DCFS CSWs to develop NSP goals. The Group Home case manager is responsible for making adjustments to the focus children's NSPs when it is determined that specific services are not producing the desired results. The focus children's DCFS CSWs reported that they receive monthly reports on the focus children's progress towards their NSP goals.

What's Not Working Now and Why (Score/Narrative of Opportunities for Improvement)

Teamwork (4 Minimally Adequate to Fair Teamwork)

Teamwork Overview: The Group Home provides minimally adequate to fair teamwork. The Group Home case managers, the educational specialist, job specialist and the Group Home residential staff meet monthly to discuss any concerns and progress of the focus children. The focus children were aware of the people who are part of their support team, however a review of the case files did not note efforts made by the Group Home to arrange team meetings which included all key parties.

The first focus child reported he did not recall having a team meeting with his DCFS CSW and the Group Home case manager. However, his DCFS CSW reported that the Group Home staff is accommodating, as the staff brought the focus child to the DCFS office when she requested a meeting with the child.

The second focus child reported he believes the Group Home staff and staff from his school, work together as a team and that they have meetings at his school where his mother was also present. The focus child reported that he, his DCFS CSW and the Group Home staff work as a team to make sure his needs are met. The Group Home case manager reported that he recently had a transitional independent living plan meeting with the DCFS CSW and the focus child. The Group Home facility manager reported that she, the DCFS CSW, the focus child and his mother participated in a Team Decision Making meeting conducted at the DCFS office.

The third focus child reported he did not recall having a meeting during the past few months whereby his DCFS CSW and the Group Home case manager were present. According to the focus child, the Group Home staff is supportive but there is disconnect between the DCFS CSW and the Group Home staff.

Although there does appear to be some teaming occurring, the Group Home does not facilitate regular team meetings where the Group Home staff, the focus children and all key parties are included in face-to-face meetings for the purpose of coordinating services, problem solving and evaluating results on behalf of the focus children.

NEXT STEPS TO SUSTAIN SUCCESS AND OVERCOME CURRENT CHALLENGES

In December 2015, OHCMD provided the Group Home with technical support related to the finding indicated in the 2014-2015 Contract Compliance Review including following SIR reporting protocol, and compliance with Title 22 physical plant requirements.

In December 2015, the OHCMD Quality Assurance Reviewer met with the Group Home to discuss results of the QAR and provided the Group Home with technical support addressing methods on improving in the area of Teamwork. The Group Home has submitted the attached Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). OHCMD Quality Assurance staff will continue to provide ongoing technical support, training, and consultation to assist the Group Home in implementing their QIP.



December 8, 2015

Gladys Hidayat, CSA I
Out-of-Home Care Management Division
9320 Telstar Ave., Room 216
El Monte, CA 91731

RE: QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Dear Gladys Hidayat,

Luvlee's Residential Care, Inc. DBA: New Dawn is submitting the following Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) for your review, based on the visit conducted December 8, 2015. It is our goal to ensure that New Dawn is providing quality services to the children in our care. The following individuals will ensure that New Dawn makes the suggested changes: Administrator, Executive Assistant and Facility Manager.

- I. **ISSUE:** Teamwork
- II. **PURPOSE:** To ensure that all the "right people" in the resident's life is working together by meeting face-to-face, communicating and establishing a comprehensive plan together, in order to ensure that the resident's time in placement is successful.
- III. **FINDINGS:** (A) Documenting efforts to schedule meetings with resident County Social Worker (CSW) to address Needs and Service Plans (NSP), behavioral issues, permanency plan, goals, etc. (B) Maintaining professional conduct by communicating with tact and diplomacy.
- IV. **PROCEDURE:**
 - A. Administrator and the Facility Manager will be responsible for contacting resident's CSW's monthly to schedule a time to meet with the resident, therapist, staff and anyone else essential in the development of the resident success. Documentation of efforts to contact the CSW will be recorded via email and/or fax. CSW's will also be provided with a NSP Map that documents when the resident NSP is due. This will allow the CSW to plan accordingly to meet with the resident to go over the NSP. The Administrator and Facility Manager will write a formal letter at least one month, prior to when the NSP is due to schedule a time to meet. New Dawn's Executive Assistant will evaluate the QIP teamwork procedure during our in-house Quality Assurance review to ensure the QIP is being implemented.
 - B. On October 29, 2015 New Dawn had a two (2) hour training on "Professionalism in the Workplace". As part of each employee job description, communication is one of the primary component to one's duty. Being able to communicate effectively, tactfully, and appropriately is necessary when communicating with one's supervisor, coworkers, CSW's, and other individuals while in the workplace. The training discussed things that are done in the workplace that exhibits lack of professionalism, such as: having a bad attitude, not dressing appropriately,

communicating inappropriately, etc. We also discussed how to exhibit professionalism in the workplace, what the agency expects from its employees and disciplinary procedures for when expectation is not being met. The Administrator and Facility Manager will hold the employees accountable for communicating appropriately. If correcting is needed, the agency will use its progressive disciplinary procedures.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sean Hodge', followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Sean Hodge,
Executive Director